ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING THE NEXT GENERATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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Purpose

This action plan represents the first step in a long-term effort to take the current environmental permitting system -- which has accomplished major achievements in controlling pollution sources -- to a new level of effectiveness and efficiency. It draws on "the best of the best" in the many recommendations and experiments to date and starts applying lessons learned in a strategic way.

Our goal is to achieve the best possible environmental results while balancing needs to streamline the permitting process, reduce unnecessary burden, provide greater flexibility, and enhance public participation. There is inherent tension in meeting these competing demands, and we won't transform the system overnight. The ultimate long-term vision will only emerge from incremental steps. But there are steps we can take now to encourage better environmental outcomes, make the current system function more effectively, and build a framework for the next generation of environmental permitting.

Background

Permits are essential instruments for assuring compliance with environmental laws. Statutes and regulations establish overall requirements for protecting the air, land, and water. Permits are the chief vehicle through which these requirements are translated into facility-level terms. Permit provisions may include any combination of requirements addressing pollution prevention, management practices, pollution treatment or control technologies, limits on emissions or effluents, and monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping. Authorized federal, state, or local permitting agencies issue and enforce the permits, and interested stakeholders have a right to provide input to the process.

Over the past 25 years we have developed a sophisticated and effective permitting system which is the linchpin for controlling significant sources of pollution. The system we have today is the result of the combined efforts of regulators, businesses, environmentalists, and the general public. It is in large part because of that system that we have accomplished as much as we have in improving environmental conditions.

We also recognize that it may be possible to build further on these accomplishments so that the system is even more effective in achieving its goals and doing so without unnecessary economic or social burdens. Ideally, the permit application process should lead to a partnership between the facility, its neighbors, and the government agency issuing the permit. The permittee would propose a plan for operating the business in a way that satisfies all legal requirements, respects community concerns and minimizes the impact on environmental

quality. The permitting agency would assure that the plan is fully protective and enforceable, and would issue the permit in a predictable timeframe that supports operation of successful business in a competitive world. The community would become engaged in the permitting process and would bring its priorities and concerns to the table for discussion.

Unfortunately, current reality sometimes presents a different picture. The present system has been successful in controlling pollution, but it can be confusing, confrontational, expensive, and time-consuming. There are considerable differences in permitting requirements depending on the type of permit and who issues it. In some cases, opportunity for public input may occur too late in the process to really make a difference. The permitting process may become highly contentious and laden with issues unrelated to the permit in question. Some companies view the process as rigid, burdensome, and endless.

In July 1994, EPA formed the Permits Improvement Team (PIT) to identify improvements and develop the long-term vision for environmental permitting. With extensive input from numerous stakeholders, the PIT advocated a performance-based permitting approach with increased public participation. The essence of this approach is to shift the focus of environmental permitting toward the measurement and assurance of performance, while providing flexibility in how a permittee meets performance standards. To the extent possible and appropriate, the public would be involved in setting performance standards and measuring performance in terms of environmental results, facility compliance, and agency implementation. In theory, a system that focuses more on a facility's overall environmental impacts, and less on narrow decisions about particular technologies or process changes, should be more meaningful for the public as well as less prescriptive for the facility.

In keeping with its long-term focus, the PIT's concept represents an ideal future state. This plan creates a process for considering and addressing the legal and practical concerns that stand between us and that ultimate vision. For example, there is no consensus today among stakeholders or federal and state permitting agencies on the desirability of a holistic system. There is significant disagreement about the extent to which we can or should link permit requirements to ambient environmental conditions. There are, however, specific steps we can take now to further improve individual permit programs and create a system that functions better overall. There are also steps that can be taken to make permits more performance-based than they are today. We believe that a system that functions more effectively will lead to net environmental gains.

While taking these concrete, achievable steps EPA will continue to explore the potential for a permitting system that looks at facilities as a whole and engages the public meaningfully in setting broad performance goals while leaving facilities maximum flexibility in achieving those goals. Over the long term, we will find out what strategies work best to achieve those ends, and will be able to refine our vision of the next generation of environmental permitting.

Overarching Principles for Improving Individual Permit Programs

Current environmental statutes reflect a single media focus that is replicated in federal and state regulations. Since we are likely to be issuing single media permits for some time, we must continue to invest in single media improvements. Over the past few years, EPA program offices and regions have taken on numerous permitting initiatives. These include a broad range of experiments involving increased operational flexibility, incentives for pollution prevention, enhanced public participation, burden reduction, and electronic reporting.

A unifying set of principles is needed to assure that individual reforms complement each other over the short term and are consistent with our long-term goals for more effective environmental permitting. The following principles should guide individual program offices, regions, and states in reform efforts underway.

Environmental Performance

Permits should assure a high level of environmental performance and offer incentives that encourage pollution prevention and improved control technologies. Permits should be consistent with local environmental goals and contribute to community-based environmental protection. Special care should be taken to ensure that no segment of the population, regardless of race, national origin, or income bears disproportionately high and adverse affects of environmental pollution.

Smarter Approaches

Permit innovations should foster smarter approaches that lead to greater predictability in the process, speed up the time it takes to issue or modify a permit, and reduce the need for permit revisions. We should continue to reduce administrative burden, use existing data wherever possible, and make full use of electronic capabilities for reporting and tracking. Administrative requirements in new rulemakings should be as consistent as possible with existing requirements, and should make best use of data collected for other purposes. We also need enough flexibility in our processes to try innovative technologies or alternative strategies that could produce better environmental results.

Stakeholder Involvement

Early, open, and meaningful stakeholder involvement is a hallmark of sound decisionmaking. We need better ways to inform stakeholders of decisions affecting them and equip them with the tools they need to participate effectively. At the same time, we should avoid rigidly uniform requirements that add burden to the process without adding value. To the extent possible, we should tailor stakeholder involvement in permitting to the relative environmental impact and degree of community interest.

The permitting process breaks down at times over community concerns unrelated to the permit in question. A facility-specific permit may not be the right vehicle for addressing broad community concerns, but it is very hard to consider a permit outside of the community context. Our challenge is to provide links to more suitable opportunities for citizens to have their concerns addressed.

Accountability

Public trust in permitting is built on access to useful information about permit conditions, their level of protectiveness, and the degree to which a facility complies with them. Permit reforms should harmonize with ongoing efforts to reinvent environmental information systems and to enhance public access to high quality data. We encourage reforms leading to burden reduction, shorter processing times, and greater operational flexibility, but mechanisms for accountability must still be adequate to support enforcement and meaningful public involvement.

ACTION PLAN

EPA will pursue the following goals, in order to move into a "second generation" of permitting tools, based on the principles laid out above:

- Making permits less prescriptive and more performance-based;
- Making public participation more meaningful and effective;
- Reducing administrative burdens and delays associated with permitting;
- Moving toward a more integrated permitting system.

Each of these goals will be pursued through a combination of media-specific improvements, cross-agency changes, and continued experimentation.

Media-Specific Improvements

Each EPA media office is heavily invested in permits improvement projects designed to reduce administrative costs and delays, increase operational flexibility, and enhance public participation. A detailed listing of permit reform and related projects is included in Attachment A, but a few prominent efforts are:

- The Office of Air and Radiation is simplifying requirements for new source permits and operating permit revisions, exploring the use of tools such as plant-wide applicability limits, advance approvals, pollution prevention measures, and new technology waivers. These initiatives are expected to reduce costs and delays without sacrificing environmental benefits. In addition, it is working with the regions in developing innovative facility-wide permits in the "P4" project described below.

- The Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances has promulgated PCB disposal regulations that streamline requirements for decontamination and certain R&D permits. They are creating opportunities for performance-based permitting and making better use of PCB waste management documents issued by states and other programs.

- The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response is developing a standardized RCRA permit to streamline permitting for hazardous waste storage and simple treatment facilities. They are encouraging states to develop performance-based, flexible permit programs for solid waste landfills and developing cross-media guidance on effective public participation in permitting.

- The Office of Water is reducing paperwork for wastewater permits by making better use of existing data, waiving reporting for information available from other sources, and increasing capabilities for electronic submission. They are also eliminating unnecessary requirements for NPDES Permits, streamlining requirements for permit modifications, and improving opportunities for public participation.

EPA regions are also actively engaged in improving permitting:

- Region 2 is developing better ways to identify community issues and involve stakeholders earlier in the process. They are also developing specific conditions and procedures that will encourage permittees to use pollution prevention.

- Region 6 has two projects underway which provide incentives for pollution prevention. Initiatives include facility-wide emissions caps, alternative operating scenarios, emissions offsets and trading, and conditional pre-approved changes that would otherwise require permit modification.

- Region 9 is providing "one-stop shopping" for dredging project approvals in San Francisco Bay. They are also developing an electronic permit submittal and document exchange program with state and local agencies to speed up the permit process and provide the public with better access to permit information.

- Region 10 has 3 pilots underway linking pollution prevention to operational flexibility through plant-wide emissions caps, pre-approval of certain changes, and emissions offsets between units within a single building. Region 10 is also piloting a project with the state of Washington on alternative approaches for dealing with very small NPDES sources.

Over the coming year, EPA will create mechanisms to share experience, facilitate coordination, and promote policy consistency among the many permit reform initiatives underway.

Building the Cross-Agency Framework for the Next Generation of Permitting

Over the short term, media-specific permit reform remains a top priority. Input from numerous stakeholders, however, suggests that we must resolve certain cross-cutting issues to build a framework for the next generation of environmental permitting. Based on this input and other lessons learned to date, we will:

- establish more consistent administrative processes across media programs;
- improve models for effective public participation; and
- develop a practical guide for a "customer service" approach to permitting.

At the same time, we will continue our efforts to develop the long-term vision of a new generation of permitting procedures, especially by:

- exploring ways to make permitting more performance-based; and
- evaluating the role and utility of integrated multi-media permits.

To ensure timely action, one of the program offices will have responsibility for directing and coordinating work in each of these areas. All other offices will, however, provide active support in each area (and regional support will be needed as well).

Consistent Administrative Processes

EPA will build on work done by a CSI Iron & Steel workgroup to identify how best to harmonize administrative permitting requirements across programs, particularly those related to procedures for issuing permits. The workgroup identified similarities, differences, and areas of potential overlap in the administrative requirements of key permitting provisions under NPDES, UIC, RCRA, PSD, and Title V programs. They found that many differences could be resolved either through changes in permit practice or regulations.

Building on this work, we will investigate the statutory and policy reasons behind the differences and also evaluate which differences are the most important. Depending upon the results, EPA will develop guidance (or, where necessary, rules) to harmonize procedures for issuing permits. In doing so, EPA will look for opportunities to trim away unnecessary administrative burdens associated with the current system (e.g., unnecessary costs and delays in the reissuance of routine and uncontroversial permits).

Better Public Participation

Public participation is required in all environmental permitting, but current requirements may not always offer meaningful opportunity for community input. Citizens may perceive that their concerns are considered too late in the process and that they don't have tools to participate effectively. At the same time, permittees are concerned about requirements that must be met even when there's minimal impact and no community interest. The challenge is to create a mechanism where issues that warrant community input are identified early and effectively addressed without unduly burdening the rest of the system. The following actions may not meet all needs of all stakeholders in these areas, but we believe they are necessary first steps toward improved public participation in permitting.

EPA will review existing public participation requirements for all permit programs. Most of this information should be collected in the administrative process analysis described above. We will also evaluate related work done by the PIT, EPA's Office of Solid Waste, the CSI Printing and Iron & Steel Sectors, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the Permit Reform Stakeholder Group, the New Source Review Stakeholder Group, various states and others. In partnership with stakeholders, we'll identify best practices, especially for alerting citizens of upcoming permit decisions and involving them early. We will then develop draft guidelines on recommended public participation activities for various permitting scenarios in all EPA programs. We will pilot the guidelines for one year with a partner state, evaluate the results, and finalize the guidelines accordingly.

As a first step, EPA has recently established a web page that provides general information, written in plain language, on all EPA permit programs. It will also link to relevant sources of facility- or location-specific information such as Envirofacts and state agency web sites, where appropriate. The website address is: www.epa.gov/permits.

Customer Service

President Clinton has directed federal agencies to improve their "customer service" -- first in 1993 in Executive Order 12862, and most recently in his announcement on "Conversations with America". We are charged with providing service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector.

Permitting is one of the most visible service areas in which EPA's actions have a direct effect on many parties, including the permittees, our state and local government partners, private citizens and the communities in which they live. We believe that improved customer service will do much to improve the overall effectiveness of the permitting system. As a result, we're developing a customer service strategy for permitting and a "toolkit" of customer service processes and techniques. We're also striving to establish a general culture of customer service throughout the permitting programs.

Performance-based Permitting

There appears to be broad consensus that environmental regulations should set protective standards and let facilities choose the best way to comply. The need to undergo a time-consuming process for issuing or modifying permits is a similar source of concern, especially in businesses where making process changes rapidly is economically important. Where permit requirements are overly restrictive, they can create unnecessary burdens and deter development of innovative technologies.

The term "performance-based" is commonly used to refer to an approach that sets targets for facilities to achieve but does not specify the means to achieve them. Precisely what this means in practice is still not well-defined. As a starting point, EPA will use the following working definition of performance-based permitting; as work in this area progresses, this definition may be changed or refined:

> *A performance-based permit sets numerical limits on the quantity and/or the concentration of pollutants a facility may release either at the point of release, within a specified area, or facility-wide. These limits, which EPA sets according to criteria in federal environmental statutes, may be based on technology standards, risk or ambient-based standards, watershed allocations, tradeable allowances, or other factors. A facility operating under a performance-based permit may choose the best ways to meet the numerical limits through any combination of pollution prevention, pollution control, or other operational practices. A performance-based permit includes methods for demonstrating compliance and may NOT set limits that are less stringent than those required by law.*

Moving to a more performance-based system will have to happen step by step. One step will be to proceed with several media-specific regulatory changes that are aimed at allowing greater flexibility within broader limits than in the past. Current efforts on making Title V operating permits, new source review permits and municipal landfill permits more performance-based are aimed at getting the necessary environmental results with less processing time and greater flexibility to industry. For example, through pilots such as the permit for Intel in Oregon, EPA has worked to provide operational flexibility through the use of an emissions cap within the Title V permit and within existing regulatory requirements while preserving (or enhancing) the level of environmental protection.

While these efforts are going on, we will begin to more clearly define and resolve the issues that underly concerns about performance-based permitting, as part of the cross-agency work in the plan. One step will be to use sample permits to assess flexible permitting tools and identify any issues needing resolution. We will also consult with states, industry and environmental representatives to refine what we mean by performance-based permitting. Once there is a greater common understanding of the specific sources of concern, we can determine the potential for greater use of other approaches, identify any legal and practical barriers and make recommendations for changes in policy or regulations as necessary.

Multi-media Permitting

Multi-media permitting has long been a topic of discussion on permit reform, and there are a number of ongoing experiments at the federal and state level. Despite its longevity as a reinvention concept, however, there is still no consensus within EPA or stakeholder groups that multi-media permitting is either desirable or necessary. Nor has it been determined whether, or to what extent, multi-media permits may be issued under current law. Potential benefits include internal efficiencies for the facility, streamlined application and reporting processes, incentives for pollution prevention, reduced pollution control costs, and enhanced community relationships. But experience to date has shown multi-media permits to be extremely resource intensive without clear evidence that these benefits are actually achievable.

To move ahead, we must take a closer look at the demand for multi-media permits, and their perceived advantages and disadvantages. The first step in doing so will be to talk in greater depth to interested stakeholders. We will then determine the extent to which the issues of concern to them will be addressed by the work on administrative harmonization and public participation that has been described above. If stakeholder interest warrants, we will analyze experience with multi-media permits to date, and evaluate their provisions, effectiveness, costs and benefits.

To determine the demand for multi-media permits, EPA will seek out the views of industry, states, and environmental and community groups. We will establish the degree to which:

- industries would take advantage of multi-media permits if they were available;
- states would implement multi-media permits (and what they need to do so); and
- community and environmental groups would find such permits useful in evaluating permit decisions.

We'll also identify which permitting aspects would be most important to integrate.

Another question to examine is whether the experience gained in pilot projects to date suggests opportunities for selective use of multi-media permits (e.g., in selected industry sectors). These opportunities could then be pursued while the broader examination of multi-media permitting continues.

Continuing, Expanding and Learning from Experiments

The process of looking for ways to improve the system does not end with the efforts described above. As we move ahead where we can, we will continue to experiment with innovative approaches. Many innovative approaches are being tested today through pilot projects and other experimental efforts; some of these efforts have already been completed. We will study these to see what broader changes they suggest. In addition, we will be continuously looking for new ways to identify and evaluate new approaches.

Some of the experimental or pilot efforts already underway include:

- Region 10 and the Office of Air and Radiation have created the Pollution Prevention in Permitting Program (P4), experimenting with P4 permits linking pollution prevention to operational flexibility in Title V air permits. These pilots are exploring the possibility that flexible permit provisions can create economic incentives leading to greater environmental benefits. P4 permits combine pollution prevention activities with opportunities for flexible operation such as process changes preapproved with upfront public participation in conjunction with facility-wide emissions caps. This flexibility allows businesses to expand and meet market demands and still meet or exceed applicable air regulations that protect environmental quality. The features and strategies in P4 are now being considered for more regulatory situations and more permitting authorities, and for broader application as a component of Title V permitting in all regions. Further applicability to other media permitting is also being considered.

- In return for substantial reductions in air emissions, Region 3 and the state of Virginia are providing operational flexibility to Merck & Co. through a site-wide emissions cap.

- Region 4 worked with the state of Florida and the Berry Corporation to develop a plan for consolidating 25 permits into a single comprehensive operating plan that serves as the basis for all permitting, enforcement, and reporting requirements.

- Region 9 and the state of California provided air permitting flexibility to Intel Corp. by eliminating the need for permit modifications in return for reduced waste generation, water consumption, and air emissions.

- The CSI Printing Sector explored ways to consolidate three media permits into a single multi-media permit, reduce paperwork, and tailor public participation to potential environmental impact.

- The CSI Iron & Steel Sector recommended improvements to speed up the permit process and improve public participation, and developed a conceptual multi-media permit based on pollution prevention planning.

In addition, a new effort will be spearheaded by the Office of Policy to explore a sector based approach to improving the permitting system. With a few notable exceptions, most permitting reform efforts to date have entailed either facility-specific pilots or program-wide reforms. Building on the Office of Policy's Sustainable Industry process for designing sector-based environmental protection strategies, EPA will develop and test a new sector-based model for permitting reform to complement the existing models. Under the new sector-based model, EPA will undertake permitting reform projects for selected industries. In partnership with these industries, and with other stakeholders, EPA will explore opportunities for improving environmental performance through changes to the current permitting system that address the unique needs and opportunities of each participating industry sector. The goal for each sector-based project is to achieve multi-stakeholder consensus on an approvable set of alternative permitting tools, techniques and processes that can be widely applied across the industry. Another goal is to compile and synthesize lessons learned across the various sector-based projects, which can help inform future permitting reform efforts.

Developing the long-term vision

Permit reform is an iterative process and our long-term goals will evolve as we progress. We're gathering data so we can focus on the most important problems. We're trying out new ideas and evaluating how well they work. We're expanding our menu of "safety nets" to make room for uncertainties and devising mechanisms for applying lessons learned. Our intent is to create a dynamic cycle where we experiment, learn, improve, and experiment some more. Through incremental improvements, we'll transform environmental permitting to make it more protective, less burdensome, more transparent, and predictable. In the end, we hope to enable permittees to operate successfully and still deliver the environmental protection we all expect.

ACTION PLAN -- SPECIFIC TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The specific steps that EPA intends to carry out to improve permitting are identified in the following two matrices.

Matrix A lists the cross-agency elements of the action plan, under three broad headings: “Management of Overall Effort”, “Building a Framework for the Next Generation”, and “Continuing and Expanding Experiments”. The matrix identifies specific tasks in each area, timeframes for each task, and the office(s) responsible for leading the effort on each task. Some policy decisions can be made quickly; others will require more time. Unless otherwise indicated, timeframes in Matrix A run from the date this plan was announced.

For most tasks, Matrix A identifies a lead office. While the role of the lead office will depend on the specific task, it generally will involve convening and chairing a cross-agency workgroup on the issue, and ensuring that the group proceeds according to schedule. The workgroup will identify the work to be done and determine how it should be allocated among the participating offices. All offices will participate actively to ensure timely completion of workgroup tasks.

Matrix B lists the most important permit reform efforts that are taking place within media programs. These efforts dovetail with the cross-agency tasks; for example, several media-specific efforts listed in Matrix B are aimed at providing greater flexibility while maintaining strong environmental standards, a key component of a performance-based permitting system.

MATRIX A

CROSS-MEDIA TASKS

NOTE: The "Responsibility" column identifies the lead office and any offices with specific roles in a particular task. Where workgroups are created to carry out a listed task, all permitting programs, as well as OGC, OECA and OP, will participate even if not specifically listed below.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Management of Overall Effort		
1a. Establish cross-agency management group to meet periodically, oversee progress on plan implementation	Lead:OR	1 month
1b. Develop system for tracking media-specific and cross-media activities.	Lead: OR	1 month
Building a Framework for the Next Generation		
2. ***Consistent Administrative Processes***		
2a. Identify and compare administrative differences across all media permit programs, focusing on procedures for issuing permits.	Lead:OW Support: OGC, OR	6 months
2b. Develop options and recommendations for harmonization based on analysis above, taking into account whether changes can be made within current regulations, would require regulatory change, or raise statutory issues.	Lead: OW	6 months after completing 2a (but coordinate with schedule on public participation reform)
2c. Obtain management direction on approach to be pursued.	Lead: OW	2 months after completing 2b
2d. Issue guidance on changes that can be made within existing regulations.	Lead: OW	6 months after completing 2c(coord. w/ pub. part.)
2e. Propose rule for harmonizing requirements where necessary.	Lead: OW	1 year after completing 2c (coord. w/ pub. part.)

3. ***Better Public Participation***		
3a. Review existing public participation requirements for all permit programs.	Lead: OR, OSWER	3 months
3b. Develop draft cross-agency guidelines on public participation activities for various scenarios. Work with stakeholders to identify best practices. Obtain management direction on approaches to pilot.	Lead: OR, OSWER	6 months after completing 3a
3c. Pilot draft guidelines and evaluate results. Obtain management direction on final approach.	Lead: OSWER	1 year after completing 3b
3d. Issue final guidance on public participation in permitting. Identify and propose any necessary rule changes to allow guidance to be implemented.	Lead: OSWER	6 months after completing 3c
3e. Post web page on environmental permitting for citizens.	OR	1 month
3f. Obtain feedback and update web page to maximize value as resource for public	OR	1 year after completing 3e
3g. Pilot and evaluate an electronic repository for all permits in a geographic area.	Regional lead with OR	1 year
4. ***Customer Service in Permitting***		
4a. Prepare Customer Service Implementation Strategy for Permitting	Customer Service in Permitting Workgroup (R2 chair)	9 months
4b. Prepare user-friendly Toolkit of customer service processes and techniques for use by EPA and its partners	Customer Service in Permitting Workgroup (R2 chair)	9 months
4c. Initiate effort to establish customer service improvements throughout Agency permitting programs.	Customer Service in Permitting Workgroup (R2 chair)	12 months

5. ***Performance-based Permitting***		
5a. Carry out current media-specific efforts to achieve more performance-based approaches within current programs, e.g.: -- P4 (see items 2a and 2b) -- NSR reform -- Municipal landfill permits	Indiv. program offices	Varies depending on initiative
5b. Using previously developed sample permits, review tools for providing permit flexibility. Identify any barriers to use and issues needing resolution to support efforts under 5a.	Lead: OR	6 months
5c. Working with state, industry and environmental stakeholders, develop better understanding of industry concerns that many permits are overly prescriptive. Based on this evaluation, refine definition of performance-based permitting.	Lead: OR	12 months
5d. To the extent warranted based on results in 5c, evaluate need and potential for greater use of performance-based permitting across agency programs, identify legal or practical barriers, and identify any appropriate changes in policy or regulations beyond those made under 5a.	Lead: OR	12 months after completing 5c
5e. Establish schedule for issuing any policy or rule changes identified in 5d.	Lead: OR	1 month after completing 5d
6. ***Multi-media Permitting***		
6a. Establish more consistent administrative processes across media and improve models for effective public participation (per steps 2 and 3 above)	See steps 2 and 3	See steps 2 & 3
6b. Conduct stakeholder outreach to evaluate demand for multi-media permits, cost implications, suggestions for making multi-media permits less costly. Produce written summary of results	Lead: OAR	6 months to conduct initial outreach; 12 months to complete outreach

6c. Assess extent to which stakeholder multi-media concerns will be addressed by work under 6a.	Lead: OAR	3 months after completion of 2b and 3b.
6d. Track and monitor experience under multi-media permits (the extent of this effort will depend on demand evaluation in 6b.). to the extent warranted, evaluate benefits and costs of existing multi-media permits, and circumstances in which they are most or least useful.	Lead: OAR	18 months from completion of 6c.
6e. Initiate steps to increase use of multi-media permits in selected areas where pilot projects studied in 6d indicate high likelihood of success.	Lead: OAR	Upon completion of 6d or sooner if supporting information becomes available
6f. Determine desirability of broad-scale use of multi-media permitting, and if desirable the changes in policy, rules or statutes that would be appropriate.	Lead: OAR	48 months
Continuing and expanding experiments		
7a. Evaluate lessons learned from P4 pilot permits, identify approaches that can be used more broadly, and develop enabling guidance and training programs to encourage those approaches. Expand OR role in promoting and supporting P4.	OAR, in partnership with OR during initial transition period Support: Region 10, OGC, OECA	Continue ongoing effort
7b. Examine opportunities to apply P4 lessons learned in future rules, and to incorporate more flexible approaches into general permitting program	Lead: OAR	Continuously, during ongoing rulemakings
7c. Evaluate possibilities for broader application of P4 in other media.	OR with other program offices	24 months

7d. Analyze experimental results from CSI and XL; identify approaches ripe for broader application. Monitor other pilots, state reforms, etc. for lessons learned.	OR	Ongoing, with report to coordinating body twice per year
7e. Explore sector-based approach to improving the permitting system		
(A) Select two or more industries for sector-based permitting reform pilots, drawing from OP's roster of Sustainable Industry Program sectors.	Lead: OP	6 months to select first sector; 18 months to select second
(B) Conduct diagnostic analysis of each selected sector, focusing on permitting issues and the role that permitting can play as a leverage point for improved environmental performance.	Lead: OP	8 months after sector selection
(C) Decide whether to proceed to follow-up activities. If so, identify potential actions that EPA, states, industry and other stakeholders can take to address each sector's priority permitting issues, and develop multi-stakeholder consensus on a strategic plan that incorporates such actions.	Lead: OP with relevant program offices	1 year after sector selection
(D) Initiate pilots, policy development, technical assistance, training and/or other actions for each selected sector, in accordance with the strategic plan in (C).	Lead: Relevant program office, and/or other stakeholders	18 months after sector selection
(E) Compile lessons learned from actions in item (D) and apply successful results broadly across each selected industry sector.	Lead:OP with relevant program offices	3 years after sector selection
(F) Refine sector-based permitting reform model and evaluate possibilities for application to other sectors.	Lead:OP	Ongoing, with final report in 4 years.

MATRIX B - PROGRAM SPECIFIC EFFORTS

AA	*project title*	*objective statement*	*Theme*	*Contact*
OAR				
OAR	Facility-wide air permits	Develop innovative permits to provide operational flexibility to sources within existing regulatory requirements e.g. Pollution Prevention in Permitting pilots, and others relying on rulemaking tailored to providing additional flexibility in return for superior environmental performance (e.g., XL projects).	Streamlining, performance-based permitting	Michael Trutna - 919-541-5345
OAR	Simplify New Source Review of Air Permitting Requirements	Reduce costs and regulatory burdens of existing new source review (NSR) permitting requirements without sacrificing environmental benefits. Revisions to the requirements were proposed July 1996. A final promulgation package is being prepared. New provisions may include elements such as plant-wide applicability limits, pollution prevention measures, new technology waivers, and regulations to implement certain provisions identified in the 1990 Amendments to the Clean Air Act.	Streamlining, enhanced public participation, performance-based permitting	Dennis Crumpler - 919-541-0871
OAR	Simplify air permit revision requirements	Streamline procedures for revising operating permits in order to reduce costs and delays associated with permitting, reduce duplication, and improve program implementation (ongoing rulemaking)	Public participation	Ray Vogel - 919-541-3153
OAR	Pharmaceutical Toxics Rule/P4 Project	The initiative will be utilized to develop a flexible Title V permit for a specific pharmaceutical production facility which in part will identify effective ways to implement the MACT standards for operational flexibility in concert with the other applicable air requirements applying to such changes.	Streamlining, performance-based permitting	Michael Trutna - 919-541-5345
OPPTS				

AA	*project title*	*objective statement*	*Theme*	*Contact*
OPPTS	Reinventing PCB Disposal Regulations	The PCB Disposal Amendments remove the requirement for a permit altogether for most decontamination activities by setting performance standards and allowing the decontaminator to meet those standards by almost any method except combustion. The need for a permit for R&D on disposal technologies is also eliminated within constraints on volume and concentration, which can be modified by the RA. Remediation and disposal of wastes along with disposal of certain industrial products, shredder wastes and demolition wastes will be allowed to be disposed of based on waste stream specific or disposal site specific risk. The new section on Coordinated Approvals" will allow EPA to recognize other PCB waste management documents (e.g. state issues PCB treatment, storage, corrective action or disposal permits) with only minimal TSCA conditions added,)	Streamlining, performance-based permitting	Tony Baney - 260-3933
OSWER				
OSWER	RCRA Standardized Permit	Significantly streamline permitting for RCRA storage and simple treatment facilities. Proposal expected September 1999.	Streamlining	Vern Myers 703-308-8660
OSWER	State Flexibility for Municipal Landfill Permits	Encourage states to develop performance-based, flexible landfill permit programs. Guidance under development.	Streamlining	Al Geswein - 703-308-7261
OSWER	Public Participation in Permitting Manual	provide cross-media guidance to the public regarding participation in the permitting process	Enhanced public participation	Virginia Phillips - 703-308-8761

AA	*project title*	*objective statement*	*Theme*	*Contact*
OW				
OW	Simplify Water Permit Paperwork	This project's goal is to reduce the paperwork burden imposed on municipalities and businesses applying for water discharge permits, without sacrificing environmental protection. These rules look for ways to obtain the necessary information more efficiently through electronic submission, submitting existing data, and giving waivers from reporting information already available through other sources. The municipal rule was proposed in December 1995 and is expected to be completed in February 1999; OW plans to propose a rule which will allow for the electronic transmission of data for the NPDES program. This proposal is scheduled for March 1999. In addition, in 1996, the Permits Division wrote a policy signed by Bob Perciasepe that interpreted the current municipal storm water application rule to allow cities to simply refer to previously submitted information when reapplying for their permits.	Reduce paper work burden using existing data and electronic submission	Contact: Municipal Rule -- Robin Danesi, 260-2991, Industrial Rule -- Greg Gwaltney, 260-9532
OW	Improving NPDES Permit Regulations (phase II)	This project is the second in a series of rules aimed to eliminate redundant requirements, provide clarification, and remove unnecessary procedures in the NPDES permitting program which do not provide any environmental benefits. The rule was originally planned to consist of simple, non-controversial regulation streamlining measures. However the package has grown to include additional and in some instances, more complex revisions such as revisions to the evidentiary hearing requirements. The rule was proposed December 1996 and the final rule is expected to be promulgated in March 1999.	Streamlining	Howard Rubin, 260-205
OW	Improving NPDES Permit Regulations (phase III)	This project is the third in a series of overall improvements to the NPDES permitting program. This rule will consist of more complex revisions to streamline NPDES regulations and is to be developed after the Round II efforts. Although the rule has yet to be scoped, some anticipated permitting revisions may include adding additional permit modifications that can be considered without public notice and improvements to public participation.	Streamlining, improved public participation	Howard Rubin, 260-2051.
OW	Streamlining Pretreatment Modifications	This project both reduces the need for and extent of permit modifications necessary to include revisions to POTW pretreatment programs. The rule reduces the number of modifications deemed to be substantial and requiring approval; the rule also streamlines public notice for modifications that will remain substantial. This rule was promulgated July 1997.	Streamlining	Jeff Smith, 260-5586

AA	*project title*	*objective statement*	*Theme*	*Contact*
OW	Improving Pretreatment Regulations	This project includes a set of revisions to the pretreatment program that reduce the burden to both the city and industrial users. (The pretreatment program results in permitting of discharges to POTW seer systems.) This set of revisions include, for example, more flexibility in prohibiting low pH wastes, allowing mass or concentration based limits, obtaining removal credits, and oversight of and sampling by significant industrial users. It will also clarify how BMPs and general permits can be used, provide for electronic reporting, and address other issues. This rule is being drafted now, and is planned for proposal in February 1999.	Burden reduction, electronic reporting	Pat Bradley, 260-6963
OW	Improving NPDES Permits for Offshore Oil & Gas Production	This project aims to reduce administrative burden and improve consistency in permits issued by EPA for offshore oil and gas production. This is a joint effort between EPA, DOE, and the industry. Current efforts focus on improving the knowledge base of all parties so that the permitting process can be better understood. Next steps will look at improvements in regional coordination and where EPA has discretion to make improvements without regulatory changes.	Burden Reduction, improve consistency	Joel Salter, 260-4847